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POPE'S ILIAD

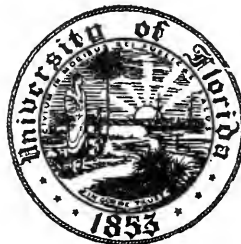
**AN EXAMINATION BY
WILLIAM MELMOTH**

**Edited by
Grover Cronin, Jr.
and
Paul A. Doyle**

**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
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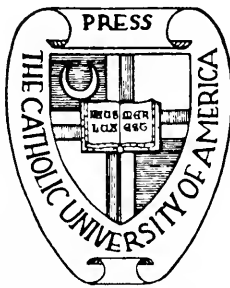
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PREFACE

There is rarely a good excuse for the exhumation of an author the world has willingly let die. Compelling reasons, however, prompt this edition of three critical essays on Pope's Iliad by a minor eighteenth-century man of letters, William Melmoth the younger. In the first place, the essays form a comparatively extended critique of one of Pope's major performances, a work whose great importance is being increasingly recognized in our own day. Although Melmoth's observations generate little excitement, are pretty much what we would expect of a conservative neo-classical critic, they are ably representative of the tradition of "polite" scholarship, and they do not deserve virtually complete neglect by students of Pope and of his reputation. In the second place, the author of these papers acquired in his own day a considerable reputation as a translator, especially for his translations of the letters of the younger Pliny and of the essays of Cicero. He brought, therefore, to his examination of Pope's Iliad a somewhat professional interest in Pope's problems. His specific comments on Pope's successes and failures ought to engage our attention even when his opinions do not win our assent. In the third place, the papers on the Iliad throw some light on Greek scholarship in England in the eighteenth century, on the "classicism" of the neoclassical period.

This edition of Melmoth's papers on Pope had its origin in a study of Melmoth submitted as a doctoral dissertation by Paul A. Doyle to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Fordham University. The work was directed by Grover Cronin, Jr., who, in the course of his discussions with his student, came to believe that the criticism of Pope deserves to be much better known than it seems to be. It is significant, perhaps, that W. L. MacDonald's recent Pope and His Critics: A Study in Eighteenth Century Personalities does not so much as mention Melmoth, even though it is obvious that Melmoth's essays are a kind of imitation of Joseph Spence's very well-known Essay on Pope's Odyssey, which MacDonald discusses at some length.

The preparation of this edition has proved to be a more irksome and time-consuming task than either editor had supposed it would be. It has not been easy to locate editions of the Fitzosborne Letters (the collection of essays in epistolary form in which the papers on Pope appeared), and the editors gladly acknowledge their great debt of gratitude to the officials of various libraries, who have been uniformly courteous and helpful: to the library staff of Yale and Columbia Universities and of The New York Public Library, and, with special warmth, to the staff of their own university library, whose librarian, Mr. Joseph Hart, seems ready to render any service that has to do with books at any hour of the day or night. Welcome assistance has been lent the editors by a number of friends and colleagues: Drs. Stanley Akielaszek, Sesto Prete, and Edward Robinson; the Rev. Rudolph Arbesmann, O.S.A., the Rev. Edwin A. Quain, S.J., and the Rev. James Reid, S.J.; Mr. James F. Brady -- all of the Department of Classics, Fordham University; Dr. and Mrs. Milton S. Smith of Guilford, Conn., who generously, during their year in England, carried out various commissions possible only in British libraries; the Rev. Arthur A. North, S.J., Dean of the Graduate School, Fordham University, who has encouraged this project in every way; Professor Morton W. Bloomfield of Ohio State University, who has been interested in the work from its inception. Wives of editors are, in one way or another, necessarily involved in the peculiar and, sometimes, irritatingly minor problems of their husbands, and it would be graceless not to thank them here, in the proper place, for their sympathy, their encouragement. But they deserve much more than a place in a preface.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR

Melmoth's criticism of Pope's Iliad appeared in his most considerable original work -- The Letters of Sir Thomas Fitzosborne on Several Subjects. The Letters, admirably reflective of the attitudinizing that characterized literary gentility in the eighteenth century, ran through at least ten editions before the turn of the century and continued to be reprinted during the first half of the next century even though Melmoth's reputation was virtually extinct by the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Scarcely anyone except professional students of the English eighteenth century now know Melmoth's name; even fewer read him at all, unless they happen upon his translations of the younger Pliny and of Cicero, which still enjoy considerable prestige and currency.

Melmoth, perhaps, too conscientiously cultivated the Horatian ideal of studious retirement. Like Gray's his was a quiet, uneventful life, but his talents were not as great as Gray's. He left a little poetry worth reprinting, but his pseudonymous Fitzosborne Letters only occasionally match the sparkle, the liveliness of Gray's actual correspondence with his friends. Shenstone comes to mind, too, when one thinks of the career of Melmoth, and, again, the difference in their subsequent reputations testifies to the essential ordinariness of Melmoth's outlook. This very ordinariness, however, justifies a re-examination of his work, for through him we can get nearer to the very heart of neoclassical sensibility than we can through writers who, in their own way, achieve uniqueness.

The eldest son of a successful barrister, Melmoth presumably received the usual education of an eighteenth-century young gentleman. The facts, however, are obscure. The registers of Cambridge University show that he studied

at Westminster, but his name is not included in The Record of Old Westminsters.¹ He was admitted a pensioner of Magdalene College, Cambridge, in 1726, did not take a degree, entered Lincoln's Inn, possibly in 1729, and was called to the bar in 1732.² He practiced law for a short time and then abandoned it for what was to be a relatively unproductive life of letters.

Although the ten editions printed in the eighteenth century suggests that the Fitzosborne Letters were popular, Melmoth remained a surprisingly inconspicuous figure in literary circles. Gray in a letter to Walpole spoke contemptuously of the vogue of the Letters, and Johnson's one recorded encounter with Melmoth was equally disrespectful.³ Mme. d'Arblay mentions Melmoth in her Diary, but the notice confirms our impression of his "remoteness." There is evidence that he was on friendly terms with Dodsley the publisher and with Shenstone, but he remains a shadow. He is a perfect specimen of a type -- the successful writer predestined to obscurity.

THE FITZOSBORNE LETTERS ON POPE'S ILIAD

The basic strategy of the three letters on Pope's Iliad is the enumeration of "beauties and defects," a popular strategy in literary criticism between Dryden and Johnson. It is a strategy with obvious shortcomings, but the quoted passages serve to deepen our understanding of many of the clichés of neoclassical theory. The particularity of Melmoth's criticism of Pope's translation inevitably challenges our own interpretations and critical verdicts and thus serves not only the purposes of history but also those of literary theory.

Melmoth wears his judicial robes with a studied graciousness and affability. Anticipating Johnson's famous (and still provocative) opinion that Pope's Iliad "is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen," Melmoth in his first paragraph writes: "To say of this noble work that it is the best which ever appeared of its kind, would be speaking in much lower terms than it deserves; the world perhaps scarce ever before saw a truly poetical translation." Melmoth understands (as we are again beginning to understand⁴) Pope's concern with the spirit rather than the letter of his author, Pope's awareness of the need of Homer's being

translated not so much "for" the eighteenth century as "into" it, and, once more anticipating Johnson, he praises Pope for frequently taking "fire from a single hint in his author" and blazing out "even with a stronger and brighter flame of poetry."⁵

In discussing Pope's embellishment of his original, Melmoth remarks of the Homeric simile that many of them in the *Iliad* "appear, perhaps, to a modern eye too naked and unadorned," and are therefore painted by Pope in all the beautiful drapery of the most graceful metaphor." It is clear that Melmoth shares the common opinion of his contemporaries that Homer lived in a rude, unpolished age and that his work, therefore, historical considerations apart, had to be "dressed up" to be acceptable in an elegant and "gentlemanly" epoch. But it is also possible to detect in Melmoth some awareness of what a recent critic has described as "functional" in Pope's modifications of Homer's similes. Douglas Knight observes that Pope "often provides information which is implicit in the poem or explicit at another point from the one where he includes it" and that the similes "are shaped so as to bring out the function which we have already noted in the Greek -- a simultaneous sharpening of the precise nature of an event and also of its significance for the larger order of the poem." Pope's expansions, Knight remarks, show that the "emphasis in the English is on the latter, on the relevance of an event rather than on its detail."⁶

Melmoth usually contents himself with expressions of preference in certain places for Pope's lines over Homer's. He cites, for example, Pope's version of the night-piece which concludes Book VIII as an instance of the translator's surpassing his original. He is apparently not capable of the sustained analysis that Knight applies to these famous lines, an analysis which shows how the "new quality of the passage as a whole grows from the success with which it directs a group of familiar phrases toward an end for which they have not been used before."⁷ But throughout his papers on Pope's *Iliad*, Melmoth exhibits concern for fidelity to the original, and his feeling, therefore, that Pope occasionally goes beyond Homer must derive from something more substantial than a vague fondness for embellishment in and for itself; there must be a conviction that Pope has manipulated his images more purposely -- for an eighteenth-century English reader, that is.

In spite of Melmoth's declaration that he looks upon everything that comes from Pope's hands "with the same degree of veneration as if it were consecrated by antiquity," the critic finds a number of passages to which he must take exception. Here Melmoth is at his most valuable as an exponent of neoclassical sensibility. In the first letter, he collects instances of wrongheaded translations, passages where Pope has unnecessarily done violence to his original. The second letter is more interesting, for in this essay Melmoth clearly appeals to what he considers to be fixed and universally accepted laws of poetry. Thus he accuses Pope of occasionally resorting to "idioms of a vulgar and familiar cast," of indulging, in an epic poem where the frivolity is unsuitable to the gravity of the Muse, a "tendency to a pun," of "doubling of epithets, without raising the idea," of "false brilliancy," which is clearly something similar to the employment of a metaphysical conceit. Much in this second letter seems today arbitrary and absolute but it provides us with a valuable picture of an eighteenth-century educated reader's manner of working through a serious poem.

In the light of what we now know of Ovid's part in the shaping of the characteristic rhetoric of the closed couplet, it is noteworthy that Melmoth censures Pope for sometimes losing "the majesty of Homer in the affectations of Ovid." No cultivated reader in the eighteenth century could miss the Ovidian touches, but there is a pedantic fussiness in Melmoth's attitude that is entirely absent from Johnson's tolerant acknowledgement: "Homer doubtless owes to his translator many Ovidian graces not exactly suitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime if nothing be taken away."⁸

The third letter is valuable more because of its quotations than because of Melmoth's critical remarks. In this letter Melmoth compares specimens of Pope's translation with specimens of other English translations, and leaves it to the reader to observe the superior merit of Pope's rendering. What we have here is the spectacle of a man of "taste" appealing to men of taste like himself to confirm his unexplained and unexplored preferences. The letter exposes the essential indolence of much neoclassical criticism; it exposes the eighteenth century's confidence in the self-evidence of such descriptive (as opposed to critical)

phrases as “a far more lively spirit of poetry,” “a more graceful turn of phrase,” “the highest possible perfection of strength and harmony.” As complacent as the third letter is, its particularity makes it valuable: it is a repository of clues as to what readers like Melmoth (and there is no reason for thinking of him as anything but representative) meant by their tags and catchwords.

Informal and dainty as the letters on the Iliad are, they prompt significant questions concerning the values of Pope’s great poem and they increase our awareness of how the poem was read in its own century.⁹ These seem valid reasons for rescuing the letters from obscurity.

THE TEXT

The first edition of Letters on Several Subjects by the Late Sir Thomas Fitzosborne, Bart. is usually dated 1742. This is the date given in the anonymous¹⁰ life of Melmoth prefaced to the 1806 London edition of the Letters and accepted by J. A. Cramb in his account of Melmoth in the Dictionary of National Biography. No copy of a 1742 edition has been found, however, and there are good reasons for doubting that one ever existed. Ralph Straus, in his book on Dodsley, relying on publishing-house records, says that the first edition was actually published on October 3, 1747 and that the title-page bore the date 1748.¹¹ That this is correct (or close to being correct) is suggested by the advertisement of the Letters in the Daily Advertiser on 3, 4, 7, 8, 9 December 1747, by Gray’s reference to the vogue of Fitzosborne in a letter dated on internal evidence “Ca. January 1748,” and by the statement of the printer John Nichols.¹²

The 1747/1748 edition has only one letter on Pope’s Iliad. The letter carried the fictitious date “October 10, 1719,” thus insinuating that the scholarly baronet, Sir Thomas Fitzosborne, was busily appraising the beauties and blemishes of Pope’s eagerly awaited translation as it made its triumphant entrance into the world of wit and fashion. In 1748 a second edition of the Letters was printed, and in the following year Melmoth published a second series of letters, described as volume II of the collection. In 1749, too, there was a two-volumes-in-one edition of the Letters. The second volume contains two additional letters on Pope, dated July 2, 1722 and August 20, 1722.

In 1750 a revised edition, labeled "third edition," was published. The fiction of topicality was abandoned, and the headings were all moved up to 1742. (This possibly explains the misdating of the first edition.) The numbering of the letters was changed from eleventh, sixty-fourth, and seventieth to twentieth, forty-third, and fifty-second. The title was slightly recast, to The Letters of Sir Thomas Fitzosborne on Several Subjects.

A copy of a "fourth edition," listed by Straus, has not been located, but the so-called fifth, sixth, and seventh editions show minor textual changes. Still other changes, of a relatively trifling nature, are to be found in the eighth edition. The ninth edition, though far from exhibiting a scrupulous care in seeing the Letters through the press, seems to show a measure of concern, presumably on the part of the author, with correcting the text. A copy of the tenth edition has not been found, but the eleventh is substantially the same as the ninth; since the tenth, dated 1796, was the last published in Melmoth's lifetime, and the last, therefore, that could betray the author's intentions, had it been located it would have been, in all likelihood, the basic text. In its absence, the ninth has been chosen by the editors as the most authoritative version.

A complete recording of variant readings, including all variants in punctuation and spelling, would have swollen the critical apparatus out of all proportion to the intrinsic merits of the Letters. The changes in punctuation show no pattern or purposefulness, and it has therefore been felt that they could go unrecorded without doing violence to the objectives of this edition. Minor and valueless variations in spelling and in the employment of capital letters have also been omitted from the textual notes.

The Fitzosborne letters on the Iliad are addressed to Euphronius. There may have been in Melmoth's mind some living counterpart of Euphronius, but, if this is so, the clues to his identity provided by Melmoth are insufficient. The headings of the letters, therefore, including the fictitious dates in 1742 have been omitted in this edition.

The Greek passages have been printed substantially as they appear in the ninth edition. A few errors that are clearly lapses on the part of author or printer, e.g., εν for ευ and πασα for παρα in the third letter, have been corrected, but the fact has been recorded in the textual notes. The Greek

text could have been normalized without impairing the value of Melmoth's criticism, but good modern texts of Homer are readily available and it has therefore been thought best to show how the text of Homer was handled by an eighteenth-century amateur scholar. The most conspicuous feature of Melmoth's Greek, of course, is his neglect of accents and breathings. Occasionally one is surprised to encounter one of the missing marks, but these appearances seem almost accidental and their appearance in the textual notes would serve no conceivable purpose. Melmoth's employment of iota subscripts presents us with a slightly different problem. He uses iota subscripts, but they appear and disappear in the various editions consulted in so haphazard a fashion as to make it clear that the author (or his printer) had no passionate interest in them. The main purposes of the Greek passages as here printed have been these: to exhibit the text of Homer consulted by Melmoth; to emphasize the carelessness with which successive editions of the Letters were seen through the press; and to confirm the impression created by the successive stages of the English text of an author who continued to fuss with his chief original work, in desultory and dilettante fashion, through half a century.

A word should perhaps be said concerning the source (or sources) of Melmoth's text of Homer. The only two important editions of the Iliad to appear in the first half of the eighteenth century were those of Joshua Barnes (1711) and Samuel Clarke (1729).¹³ It seems virtually certain that Melmoth leafed through both of these editions in preparing his papers on Pope. His line-numbering of the Greek version of the night-piece at the end of Book Eight significantly corresponds to Clarke's numbering rather than to Barnes', and much of the erudition so jauntily displayed by Melmoth was doubtless fetched no farther than from Clarke's footnotes. On the other hand, when Clarke's notes to a particular passage chosen by Melmoth for special comment fail to provide a striking parallel to the critic's observations, Barnes almost invariably offers a note of a nature to invite speculation on the possibility that Melmoth has gone to little more trouble than is required to open a second version of the text. The notes to this edition of Melmoth's letters on Pope provide an instructive commentary on what passed for polite scholarship in the eighteenth century.

THE TEXTUAL NOTES

The following symbols are used for the editions of the Fitzosborne Letters located and consulted.

- 1 The 1747/1748 presumptive first edition
- 2 The 1748 second edition of Vol. I (the only volume published in the 1747/1748 edition)
- 3 The 1749 edition, two-volumes-in-one
- 4 The 1750 "third edition"
- 5 The 1758 "fifth edition"
- 6 The 1763 "sixth edition"
- 7 The 1769 "seventh edition"
- 8 The 1776 "eighth edition"
- 9 The 1784 "ninth edition"

THE FIRST LETTER TO EUPHRONIUS

Such is our pride, our folly, or our fate,
That few, but those who cannot write, translate.¹

Εὐτ' ὄρεος κορυφῇσι Νότος κατεχευεν ὀμιχλὴν,
 Ποιμέσιν^ε οὐτὶ φίλῃν, κλεπτῇ δὲ τε νυκτὸς ἀ-
 μείνω,
 Τόσσον τίς τ' ἐπιλευσσει, ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ λαῶν
 Ὡς ἀρα τῶν ὑπο ποσσὶ κόνισσαλος ὠρνυτ' ἀέλ-
 λης
 Ἐρχομένων.

9

Thus from his flaggy wings when Eur² sheds
 A night of vapours round the mountain-heads,
 Swift-gliding mists the dusky fields invade;
 To thieves more grateful than the midnight shade:
 While scarce the swains their feeding flocks survey,
 Lost and confus'd amidst the thicken'd day:
 So wrapt in gath'ring dust the Grecian train,
 A moving cloud, swept on and hid the plain.

(Bk. iii, 15-22)

When Mars, being wounded by Diomed, flies back to heaven, Homer compares him in his passage to a dark cloud raised by summer heats, and driven by the wind.

Οἷη δ' ἐκ νεφῶν ἐρεβεννῇ^f φαίνεται ἀη,
 Καυματος ἐξ ἀνέμοιο δυσσεος ορνυμενοιο.^g

Il. v. 864^h(-865)

The inimitable translator improves this image, by throwing in some circumstances, which, though not in the original, are exactly in the spirit of Homer:

As vapours, blown by Auster's sultry breath,
 Pregnant with plagues, and shedding seeds of death,
 Beneath the rage of burning Sirius rise,
 Choak the parch'd earth, and blacken all the skies:
 In such a cloud the god, from combat driv'n,
 High o'er the dusty whirlwind scales the heav'n.

(Bk. v, 1058-63)

There is a description in the eighth book, which Eus-tathius, it seems, esteemed the most beautiful night-piece that could be found in poetry.³ If I am not greatly mistaken, however, I can produce a finer: and I am persuaded even the warmest admirer of Homer will allow, the following

f ἐρεβεννε 5, 6, 7.

g δυσσεον ορνυησοιο 6, 7.

h Omitted 8.

Ως δ' ὅτε χειμαρροὶ ποταμοὶ κατ' ὄρεσφι ρε-
 οντες,
 Ες μισγαγκειαν^η συμβαλλετον οβριμον υδωρ,
 Κρουνων εκ μεγαλων, κοιλης εντοσθε χαραδρης,
 Των δε τε τηλοσε δουπον εν ουρεσιν εκλυε
 ποιμην·
 Ως των μισγομενων γενετο^ο ιαχη τε φοβος τε.

(Il. iv. 452-56)

As torrents roll, encreas'd by num'rous rills,
 With rage impetuous down their echoing hills,
 Rush to the vales, and, pour'd along the plain,
 Roar thro' a thousand channels to the main;
 The distant shepherd trembling hears the sound:
 So mix both hosts, and so their cries rebound.

(Bk. iv, 516-521)

There is no antient author more likely to betray an injudicious interpreter into meannesses, than Homer; as it requires the utmost skill and address to preserve that venerable air of simplicity which is one of the characteristical marks of that poet,⁶ without sinking the expression or the sentiment into contempt. Antiquity will furnish a very strong instance of the truth of this observation, in a single line which is preserved to us from a translation of the Iliad by one Labeo, a favourite poet, it seems, of Nero; it is quoted by an old scholiast upon Persius, and happens to be a version of the following passage in the fourth Book:

Ωμον βιβρωθοις Πριαμον Πριαμοιο τε παιδας.

(Il. iv. 35)

which Nero's admirable poet rendered literally thus:

Crudum manduces Priamum Priamique pisinnos.

I need not indeed have gone so far back for my instance: a Labeo of our own nation would have supplied^p me with one

η λισγαγκειαν 5, 6, 7.

ο γενεται 5, 6, 7.

p supply'd 1, 2.

much nearer at hand. Ogilby or Hobbs (I forget which) has translated this very verse in the same ridiculous manner:

And eat up Priam and his children all.⁷

But among many other passages of this sort I observed one in the same book, which raised my curiosity to examine in what manner Mr. Pope had conducted it. Juno, in a general council of the gods, thus accosts Jupiter:

Αἰνοτάτε Κρονίδη,

Πως εθελεις αλιον θειναι πονον ηδ' ατελεστον
Ιδρωθ', ον ιδρωσα μογψ; καμετην δε μοι ιπποι
Λαον αγειρουση, Πριαμψ κακα, τοιο τε παισιν.

(Il. iv. 25-8)

which is as much as if she had said in plain English, “Why surely, Jupiter, you won’t^q be so cruel as to render ineffectual all my expence of labour and sweat. Have I not tired both my horses^r in order to raise forces to ruin Priam and his family?” It requires the most delicate touches imaginable, to raise such a sentiment as this into any tolerable degree of dignity. But a skilful artist knows how to embellish the most ordinary subject; and what would be low and spiritless from a less masterly pencil, becomes pleasing and graceful when worked up by Mr. Pope’s:

Shall then, O tyrant of th’ etherial plain,
My schemes, my labours, and my hopes be vain?
Have I for this shook Ilion with alarms,
Assembled nations, set two worlds in arms?
To spread the war I flew from shore to shore,
Th’ immortal coursers scarce the labour bore.

(Bk. iv, 35-40)

But to shew you that I am not so enthusiastic an admirer of this glorious performance, as to be blind to its imperfections; I will venture to point out a passage or two

q will not 8.

r every horse in my stable 1, 2, 3

(amongst others which might be mentioned) wherein Mr. Pope's usual judgment seems to have failed him.

When Iris is sent to inform Helen that Paris and Menelaus were^s going to decide the fate of both nations by single combat, and were actually upon the point of engaging; Homer describes her as hastily throwing a^t veil over her face, and flying^u to the Scaean gate, from whence she might have a full view of the field of battle:

Αυτικά δ' ἀργεννησι^v καλυψαμένη οἶκον ἑστίν
 ὦρατ' ἐν θαλαμοῖο, τέρεν κατὰ δακρυχέουσα.
 Οὐκ οἶη^ο ἀμὰ τήγχε καὶ ἀμφιπολοὶ δὺ' ἐποντο, ἔσ.
 Αἰψά δ' ἐπειθ' ἱκανόν, ὅθι Σαῖαι πυλαὶ ἦσαν.

Il. iii. 142 (iii. 141-5)

Nothing could possibly be more interesting to Helen, than the circumstances in which she is here represented: it was necessary therefore to exhibit her, as Homer we see has, with much eagerness and impetuosity in her motion. But what can be more calm and quiet^w than the attitude wherein the Helen of Mr. Pope appears?

O'er her fair face a snowy veil she threw,
 And softly sighing from the loom withdrew:
 Her handmaids _____ wait
 Her silent footsteps to the Scaean gate.

(Bk. iii, 187-90)

Those expressions of speed and impetuosity which occur so often in the original lines, viz. αυτικά - ωρατό^x-αιμα ικανόν, would have been sufficient, one should have imagined, to have guarded a translator from falling into an impropriety of this kind.

This brings to my mind another instance of the same nature, where our English poet, by not attending to the

s are 1, 2, 3.

t her 1, 2, 3.

u fleeing 5, 6, 7.

v ἀργεννησι 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

w reposed 5, 6, 7, 8.

x ωραται 5, 6, 7, 8.

particular expression of his author, has given us a picture of a very different kind than what Homer intended. In the first Iliad the reader is introduced into a council of the Grecian chiefs, where very warm debates arise between Agamemnon and Achilles. As nothing was likely to prove more fatal to the Grecians than a dissension between those two princes, the venerable old Nestor is represented as greatly alarmed at the consequences of this quarrel, and rising up to moderate between them, with a vivacity much^y beyond his years. This circumstance Homer has happily intimated by a single word:

τοιοῖσι δὲ Νέστωρ

ΑΝΟΡΟΥΣΕ.

(Il. i. 247-248)

Upon which one of the commentators very justly observes--
ut in re magna et periculosa, non placidè assurgentem facit,
sed prorumpentem senem quoque.⁸ A circumstance which
Horace^z seems to have had particularly in his view in the
epistle to Lollius:

Nestor componere lites
Inter Peleiden festinat et inter Atriden.

Ep. 1.2. (lines 11-12)

This beauty Mr. Pope has utterly overlooked,^{aa} and substituted
an idea very different from that which the verb ἀνορούω sug-
gests: he renders it,

Slow from his seat arose the Pylian sage.⁹

(Bk. i, 330)

But^{bb} a more unfortunate word could scarcely have been
joined with arose, as it destroys the whole spirit of the piece,

y much omitted 1, 2, 3, 6, 7.

z This circumstance Horace 5, 6, 7, 8.

aa But this beauty Mr. Pope has utterly overlooked 1, 2, 3.

But Mr. Pope has utterly overlooked this beauty 5, 6, 7, 8.

bb Now 5, 6, 7, 8.

and is just the reverse of what both the occasion and the original required.

I doubt, Euphronius, you are growing weary: will you have patience, however, whilst I mention one observation more? and I will interrupt you no longer.^{cc}

When Menelaus and Paris enter the lists, Pope says,

Amidst the dreadful vale the chiefs advance,
All pale with rage, and shake the threat'ning lance.

(Bk. iii, 425-6)

In the original it is,

Ες μεσσον Τρωων και Αχαιων εστιχωντο
Δεινον δερκομενοι.^{dd}

Il. iii. 341. (iii. 341-2)

But does not the expression - all pale with rage - call up a very^{ee} contrary idea to δεινον δερκομενοι?^{ff} The former seems to suggest to one's imagination the ridiculous passion of a couple of female scolds; whereas the latter conveys the terrifying image of two indignant heroes, animated with calm and deliberate valour. Farewel.^{gg} I am &c.^{hh}

cc and I will interrupt you no longer omitted 5, 6, 7, 8.

dd δερκομενον 1, 2, 3.

ee very omitted 5, 6, 7, 8.

ff δερκομενον 1, 2, 3.

gg Farewell 1, 2.

hh I am, &c. omitted 5, 6, 7, 8.

Chapter Three

THE SECOND LETTER TO EUPHRONIUS

It is a pretty observation, which I have somewhere met, that "the most pleasing of all harmony arises from the censure of a single person, when mixed with the general applauses of the world."¹ I almost suspect, therefore, that you are considering the interest of your admired author, when you call upon me for my farther objections to his performance; and are for joining me, perhaps, to the number of those who advance his reputation, by opposing it. The truth, however, is, you could not have chosen a critic (if a critic I might venture to call myself) who has a higher esteem for all the compositions of Mr. Pope; as indeed I look upon every thing that comes from his hands, with the same degree of veneration as if it were consecrated by antiquity. Nevertheless, tho' I greatly revere his judgment, I cannot absolutely renounce my own; and since some have been bold enough to advance, that even^a the sacred writings themselves do not always speak the language of the Spirit, I may have leave to suspect of the poets what has been asserted of the prophets, and suppose that their pens are not, at all seasons, under the guidance of inspiration. But as there is something extremely ungrateful to the mind, in dwelling upon those little spots that necessarily attend the lustre of all^b human merit; you must allow me to join his beauties with his imperfections, and admire with rapture after having condemned with regret.

There is a certain modern figure of speech, which the authors of The art of sinking in poetry have called the diminishing.² This, so far as it relates to words only, consists in debasing a great idea, by expressing it in a term of meaner import. Mr. Pope has himself now and then fallen into this kind of the profound, which he has with such uncommon wit and spirit exposed in the writings of others.

a even omitted 3.

b all omitted 3.

Thus Agamemnon, addressing himself to Menelaus and Ulysses, asks,

And can you, chiefs, without a blush survey
Whole troops before you, lab'ring in the fray?

B. iv (Bk. iv, 398-99)

So likewise Pandarus, speaking of Diomed, who is performing the utmost efforts of heroism in the field of battle, says,

some guardian of the skies,
Involv'd in clouds, protects him in the fray,

(Bk.) V. 235(-236)

But what would you think, Euphronius, were you to hear of the "impervious foam" and "rough waves of a brook?" would it not put you in mind of that droll thought of the ingenious Dr. Young, in one of his epistles to our author, where he talks of a puddle in a storm?³ yet by thus confounding the properties of the highest objects with those of the lowest, Mr. Pope has turned one of the most pleasing similes^c in the whole Iliad, into downright burlesque:

As when some simple swain his cot forsakes,
And wide thro' fens an unknown journey takes;
If chance a swelling brook his passage stay,
And foam impervious cross the wand'rer's way,
Confus'd he stops, a length of country past,
Eyes the rough waves, and tir'd, returns at last.

(Bk.) V. 734(-739)

This swelling brook, however, of Mr. Pope, is in Homer a rapid river, rushing with violence into the sea:

Στην ἐπ' ὠκυροῦ ποταμῷ ἀλαδὲ προρεοντι.

(Bk.) V. 598

c similies 3.

It is one of the essential requisites of an epic poem, and indeed of^d every other kind of serious poetry, that the style be raised above common language; as nothing takes off so much from that^e solemnity of diction, from which the poet ought never to depart, as idioms of a vulgar and familiar cast.⁴ Mr. Pope has sometimes neglected this important rule; but most frequently in the introduction of his speeches. To mention only a few instances:

That done, to Phoenix Ajax gave the sign.

(Bk.) ix. 291

With that stern Ajax his long silence broke,

(Bk.) ix. 735

With that the venerable warrior rose,

(Bk.) x. 150

With that they stepp'd aside, Etc,

(Bk.) x. 415

whereas Homer generally prefaces his speeches with a dignity of phrase, that calls up the attention of the reader to what is going to be uttered. Milton has very happily copied his manner in this particular, as^f in many others; and tho' he often falls into a flatness of expression, he has never once, I think, committed that error upon occasions of this kind. He usually ushers in his harangues with something characteristic of the speaker, or that points out some remarkable circumstance of his present situation, in the following manner:

Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began.

i. 82(-83)

d of omitted 5,6,7.

e the 3.

f as well as 3.

him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer

i. 1258

He ended frowning:

on the other side uprose

Belial,

And with persuasive accents thus began.

ii. 106(-9)^h

If you compare the effect which an introduction of this descriptive sort has upon the mind, with those low and unawakening expressions which I have marked in the lines I just now quoted from our English Iliad; you will not, perhaps, consider my objection as altogether without foundation.

All opposition of ideas should be carefully avoided in a poem of this kind, as unbecoming the gravity of the heroic Muse. But does not Mr. Pope sometimes sacrifice simplicity to false ornament, and lose the majesty of Homer in the affectations of Ovid? Of this sort a severe critic would, perhaps, esteem his calling an army marching with spears erect, a moving iron wood:¹

Such and so thick th'embattled squadrons stood
With spears erect, a moving iron wood.

(Bk. iv, 322-23)

There seems also to be an inconsistency in the two parts of this description; for the troops are represented as^j standing still, at the same time that the circumstances mentioned of the spears, should rather imply (as indeed the truth is) that they were in motion. But if the translator had been faithful to his author in this passage, neither of these objections could have been raised: for in Homer it is,

g Actually line 127.

h i. 106 3.

i rod 7.

j as omitted 8.

what do you think of the shaft that fell dry or guiltless?⁵ where, you see, one figurative epithet is added as explanatory of the other. The doubling of epithets, without raising the idea, is not allowable in compositions of any kind; but least of all in poetry. It is, says Quintilian, as if every common soldier in an army were to be attended with a valet; you increase your number without adding to your strength.⁶

But if it be a fault to crowd epithets of the same import one upon the other;^p it is much more so to employ such as call off the attention from the principal idea to be raised, and turn it upon little or foreign circumstances. When Aeneas is wounded by Tydides, Homer describes Venus as conducting him thro' the thickest tumult of the enemy, and conveying him from the field of battle. But while we are following the hero with our whole concern, and trembling for the danger which surrounds him on all sides, Mr. Pope leads us off from our anxiety for Aeneas, by an uninteresting epithet relating to the structure of^q those instruments of death, which were every where^r flying about him; and we are coldly informed, that the darts were feathered:

Safe thro' the rushing horse and feather'd flight
Of sounding shafts, she bears him thro' the fight.

(Bk.) v.^s 393(-394)

But as his^t epithets sometimes debase the general image to be raised; so they now and then adorn them with a false brilliancy. Thus, speaking of a person slain by an arrow, he calls it a pointed death, (Bk.) iv. 607. describing another who was attacked by numbers at once, he tells us,

A grove of lances glitter'd at his breast.

(Bk.) iv. 621

and representing a forest on fire, he says,

p another 8.

q the structure of omitted 8.

r every where were 8.

s Ver. 7

t Mr. Pope's 3.

In blazing heaps the grove's old honours fall,
And one refulgent ruin levels all.

(Bk.) x. 201^u

But one of the most unpardonable instances of this kind is, where he relates the death of Hypsenor, a person who it seems, exercised the sacerdotal office:

On his broad shoulder fell the forceful brand,
Thence glancing downward lopt his holy hand,
And stain'd^v with sacred blood the blushing sand.

(Bk. v, 105-107)

To take the force of this epithet, we must suppose that the redness which appeared upon the sand on this occasion, was an effect of its blushing to find itself stained^w with the blood of so sacred a person: than which there cannot be a more forced and unnatural thought. It puts me in mind of a passage in a French dramatic writer, who has formed a play upon the story of Pyramus and Thisbe. The hapless maid, addressing herself to the dagger, which lies by the side of her lover, breaks out into the following exclamation:

Ah! voici le poignard qui du sang de son maître,
S'est souillé lachement: il en rougit le traître.⁷

Boileau, taking notice of these lines, observes, toutes les glaces du Nord ensemble ne sont pas, à mon sens, plus froides que cette pensée.⁸ But of the two poets, I know not whether Mr. Pope is not most to be condemned: for whatever shame the poignard might take to itself, for being concerned in the murder of the lover; it is certain that the sand had not the least share in the death of the priest.

The antient critics have insisted much upon propriety of language; and, indeed, one may with great justice say, what the insulted Job does to his impertinent friends, how forcible are right words!⁹ The truth is, tho' the sentiment must always support the expression, yet the expression must give grace

u An error for Bk. xi, 203-204.

v stained 7.

w staided 7.

and efficacy to the sentiment; and the same thought shall frequently be admired or condemned, according to the merit of the particular phrase in which it is conveyed. For this reason J. Caesar, in a treatise which he wrote concerning the Latin language, calls a judicious choice of words, the origin^x of eloquence:¹⁰ as indeed neither oratory nor poetry can be raised to any degree of perfection, where this their principal root is neglected. In this art Virgil particularly excels; and it is the inimitable grace of his words (as Mr. Dryden somewhere justly observes)¹¹ wherein that^y beauty principally consists, which gives so inexpressible a pleasure to him, who best understands their force. No man was ever a more skilful master of this powerful art, than Mr. Pope; as he has, upon several occasions throughout this translation, raised and dignified his style with certain antiquated words and phrases, that are most wonderfully solemn and majestic. I cannot, however, forbear mentioning an instance, where he has employed an obsolete term less happily, I think, than is his general custom. It occurs in some lines which I just now quoted for another purpose:

On his proud^z shoulder fell the forceful brand
Thence glancing downward lopt his holy hand.

(Bk.) v. 105(→106)

Brand is sometimes used by Spenser^{aa} for a sword; and in that sense it is here introduced. But as we still retain this word in a different application, it will always be improper to adopt^{bb} it in its antiquated meaning, because it must necessarily occasion ambiguity: an error in style of all others the most to be avoided. Accordingly, every reader of the lines I have quoted, must take^{cc} up an idea very different from that which the poet intends, and which he will carry on with him, till he arrives at the middle of the second verse. And if he happens to be unacquainted with the language of our old writers, when he comes to

x origine 4,5,6,7.

y the 8.

z Sic. It is an error for "broad."

aa Spencer 3,4,5,6,7.

bb adapt 5,6,7.

cc must necessarily take 3.

lopt his holy^{dd} hand,

he will be lost in a confusion of images, and have absolutely no idea remaining.

There is another uncommon elegance in the management of words, which requires a very singular turn of genius, and great delicacy of judgment to attain. As the art I just before mentioned, turns upon employing antiquated words with force and propriety; so this consists in giving the grace of novelty to the received and current terms of a^{ee} language, by applying them in a new and unexpected manner;

Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.

Hor. (Ars. Poetica, lines 47-8)

The great caution, however, to be observed in any attempt of this kind, is so judiciously to connect the expressions, as to remove every doubt concerning the signification in which they are designed: for as perspicuity is the end and supreme excellency of writing, there cannot be a more fatal objection to an author's style, than that it stands in need of a commentator. But will not this objection lie against the following verse?

Next artful Phereclus untimely fell.

(Bk.) V. 75

The word artful is here taken out of its appropriated acceptance, in order to express

ὅς χερσιν ἐπιστάτο δαιδαλά παντα
Τευχεῖν.

(Bk. v. 60-61)

But however allowable it may be (as indeed it is not only allowable, but graceful) to raise a word above its ordinary

dd sacred 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

ee a omitted 3.

import, when the callida junctura (as Horace calls it) determines 'at once the sense in which it is used: yet it should never be cast so far back from its customary meaning, as to stand for an idea which has no relation to what it implies, in its primary and natural state. This would be introducing uncertainty and confusion into a language; and turning every sentence into a riddle. Accordingly, after we have travelled on thro' the several succeeding lines in this passage, we are obliged to change the idea with which we set out; and find, at last, that by the artful Phereclus we are to understand, not, what we at first apprehend,^{ff} a man of cunning and design; but one who is skilled in the mechanical arts.

It is with a liberty of the same unsuccessful kind, that Mr. Pope has rendered

Τον προτερος προσειπε Λυκαονος αγλαος^{gg} υιος·

(Bk.) V. 276

Stern Lycaon's warlike race begun.

(Bk. v. 339)

I know not by what figure of speech, the whole race of a man can denote his next immediate descendant: and, I fear, no synecdoche can acquit this expression of nonsense. The truth is, whoever ventures to strike out of^{hh} the common road, must be more than ordinarilyⁱⁱ careful, or he will probably lose his way.

This reminds me of a passage or two, where our poet has been extremely injurious to the sense of his author, and made him talk a language which he never uses; the language, I mean, of absurdity. In the sixth Iliad, Agamemnon assures Menelaus,

παντες

Ιλιου εξαπολοιιατ,^{jj} ακηδεστοι

(Bk.) vi. (59-)-60^{kk}

ff apprehended 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

gg αγαλαος 8.

hh in 3.

ii ordinary 3.

jj εξαπολοιειτ' 5, 6, 7.

kk Omitted 8.

But in Mr. Pope's version, that chief tells his brother,

Ilion shall perish whole and bury all.

(Bk. vi, 73)

Perhaps it may be over-nice to remark, that as the destruction of Troy is first mentioned, it has a little the appearance of nonsense to talk afterwards of her burying¹² her sons. However the latter part of this verse directly contradicts the original: for Agamemnon is so far from asserting that Ilion should bury all her inhabitants, that he pronounces positively, they should not be buried at all: a calamity, in the opinion of the ancients, of all others the most terrible. But possibly the error may lie in the printer, not in the poet; and perhaps the line originally stood thus:

Ilion shall perish whole, unbury'd, all.

If so, both my objections vanish: and those who are conversant with the press, will not think this supposition improbable; since much more unlikely mistakes often happen by the carelessness of compositors.

But tho' I am willing to make all the allowance possible to an author, who raises our admiration too often not to have a right to the utmost candour, wherever he fails; yet I can find no excuse for an unaccountable absurdity he has fallen into, in translating a passage of the tenth book. Diomed and Ulysses, taking advantage of the night, set out in order to view the Trojan camp. In their way they meet with Dolon, who is going from thence to the Grecian, upon an errand¹¹ of the same kind. After having seized this unfortunate adventurer, and examined him concerning the situation and designs of the enemy; Diomed draws his sword, and strikes off Dolon's head, in the very instant that he is supplicating for mercy:

Φθεγγόμενου δ' ἄρα τοῦ γε καρὴ κονιῆσιν ἐμ-
χθη.

(Bk.) x. 457

¹¹ expedition 5, 6, 7.

Mr. Pope has turned this into a most extraordinary miracle, by assuring us that the head spoke after it had quitted the body:

The head yet speaking, mutter'd as it fell.

(Bk. x, 527)

This puts me in mind of a wonder of the same kind in the Fairy Queen, where Corflambo is represented as blaspheming, after his head had been struck off by prince Arthur:

He smote at him with all his might and main
 So furiously, that ere^{mm} he wist, he found
 His head before him tumbling on the ground,
 The whiles his babbling tongue did yet blaspheme,
 And curs'd his God, that did him so confound.

Book iv. 8 (stanza 45)

But Corflambo was the son of a giantess, and could conquer whole kingdoms by only looking at them. We may, perhaps, therefore allow him to talk, when every other man must be silent: whereas there is nothing in the history of poor Dolon that can give him the least pretence to thisⁿⁿ singular privilege. The truth is,^{oo} Mr. Pope seems to have been led into this blunder by Scaliger, who has given the same sense to the verse, and then with great wisdom and gravity observes, falsum est a pulmone caput avulsum loqui posse.¹³

The most pleasing picture in the whole Iliad, is, I think, the parting of Hector and Andromache: and our excellent translator,^{pp} has, in general, very successfully copied it. But in some places he seems not to have touched it with that delicacy of pencil, which graces the original; as he has entirely lost the beauty of one of the figures. Hector is represented as extending his arms to embrace the little Astyanax, who being terrified with the unusual appearance of a man in armour, throws himself back upon his nurse's breast, and falls into tears. But tho' the hero and his son were designed to draw

mm e'er 3, 8.

nn that 8.

oo The truth is omitted 5, 6, 7.

pp Instead of our excellent translator, Mr. Pope 3, 8.

our principal attention, Homer intended likewise that we should cast a glance towards the nurse. Accordingly,^{qq} he does not mark her out merely by the name of her office; but adds an epithet to shew that she makes no inconsiderable figure in the piece: he does not simply call her τιθηνη but εϋζωνος τιθηνη. This circumstance Mr. Pope has entirely overlooked:

Ως ειπων, ου παιδος ορεξατο^{rr} παιδιμος Εκτωρ.
 Αφ δ' ο παῖς προς κολπον εϋζωνοιο^{ss} τιθηνης
 Εκλινθη ιαχων, πατρος φιλου οφιν ατυχθεις,^{tt}
 Ταρβησας^{uu} χαλκον τε,^{vv} ιδε λοφον ιππιοχαιτην,
 Δεινον απ' ακροτατης κορυθος νευοντα νοησας.
 Εκ δ' εγελασσε πατηρ τε φιλος, και ποτνια μη-
 τηρ.
 Αυτικ' απο κρατος κορυθ' ειλετο παιδιμος Ε-
 κτωρ,
 και την μεν κατεθηκεν επι χθονι παμφανωσαν.

(Bk.) vi. 466(-473)

Thus having said, th' illustrious chief of Troy
 Stretch'd his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy;
 The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
 Scar'd by the dazzling helm and nodding crest:
 With secret pleasure each fond parent smil'd,
 And Hector hasted to relieve his child:
 The glitt'ring terrors from his head unbound,
 And plac'd the beaming helmet on the ground.

(Bk. vi, 594-601)

I was going to object to the glittering terrors, in the last line but one: but I have already taken notice of these little affected expressions, where the substantive is set at variance with its attribute.

It is the observation of Quintilian, that no poet ever excelled Homer in the sublimity with which he treats great subjects, or in the delicacy and propriety he always discovers

qq For this purpose 5, 6, 7.

rr ορεξεται 5, 6, 7.

ss ευζανοιο 5, 6, 7.

tt ειτυχθεις 5, 6, 7.

uu ταρβησαν 3, 5, 6, 7.

vv τη 7.

in the management of small ones.¹⁴ There is a passage in the ninth Iliad, which will justify the truth of the latter of these observations. When Achilles receives Ajax and Ulysses in his tent, who were sent to him in the name of Agamemnon, in order to prevail with him to return to the army; Homer gives a very minute account of the entertainment, which was prepared for them on^{ww} that occasion. It is impossible, perhaps, in modern language to preserve the same dignity in descriptions of this kind, which so considerably raises the original: and indeed Mr. Pope warns his readers not to expect much beauty in the picture. However, a translator should be careful not to throw in any additional circumstances, which may lower and debase the piece; which yet Mr. Pope has, in his version of the following line:

Πυρ δε Μενoitιαδης^{xx} δαιεν μεγα, ισοθεος φως.

(Bk.) ix. 211^{yy}

Mean while Patroclus sweats, the fire to raise.

(Bk. ix, 277)

Own the truth, Euphronius: does not this give you the idea of a greasy cook at a kitchen fire? whereas nothing of this kind is suggested in the original. On the contrary, the epithet ισοθεος seems to have been added by Homer, in order to reconcile us to the meanness of the action, by reminding us of the high character of the person who is engaged in it; and, as Mr. Addison observes of Virgil's husbandman, that "he tosses about his dung with an air of gracefulness;"¹⁵ one may, with the same truth, say of Homer's hero, that he lights his fire with an air of dignity.

I intended to have closed these hasty objections, with laying before you some of those passages, where Mr. Pope seems to have equalled, or excelled his original. But I perceive I have already extended my letter beyond a reasonable limit: I will reserve therefore that more pleasing, as well as much easier task, to some future occasion. In the mean

ww upon 3.

xx Μενoitιαδες 3, 5, 6, 7.

yy Omitted 3.

time, I desire you will look upon these remarks, not as proceeding from a spirit of cavil (than which I know not any more truly contemptible) but as an instance of my having read your favourite poet with that attention, which his own unequalled merit and your judicious recommendation most deservedly claim. I am, &c.

Chapter Four

THE THIRD LETTER TO EUPHRONIUS

Surely, Euphronius, the spirit of criticism has strangely possessed you. How else could you be willing to step aside so often from the amusements of the gayest scenes, in order to examine with me certain beauties, far other than those which at present, it might be imagined, would wholly engage your attention? Who, indeed, that sees my friend over-night supporting the vivacity of the most sprightly assemblies, would expect to find him the next morning gravely poring over antiquated Greek, and weighing the merits of antient and modern geniuses?^a But I have long admired you as an elegant spectator formarum, in every sense of the expression; and you can turn, I know, from the charms of beauty to those of wit, with the same refinement of taste and rapture. I may venture therefore to resume our critical correspondence without the form of an apology; as it is the singular character of Euphronius, to reconcile the philosopher with the man of the world, and judiciously divide his hours between action and retirement.

What has been said of a celebrated French translator,¹ may with equal justice be applied to Mr. Pope, "that it is doubtful whether the dead or the living are^b most obliged to him." His translations of Homer, and imitations of Horace, have introduced to the acquaintance of the English reader, two of^c the most considerable authors in all antiquity; as indeed they are equal to the credit of so many original works. A man must have a very considerable share of the different spirit which distinguishes those most admirable poets, who is capable of representing in his own language, so true an image of their respective manners. If we look no farther than these works themselves, without considering them with

a genius 8.

b be 8.

c of omitted 3.

respect to any attempts of the same nature which have been made by others, we shall have sufficient reason to esteem them for their own intrinsic merit. But how will this uncommon genius rise in our admiration, when we compare his classical translations with those similar performances, which have employed some of the most celebrated of our poets? I have lately been turning over the Iliad with this view; and, perhaps, it will be no unentertaining amusement to you, to examine the several copies which I have collected of the original, as taken by some of the most considerable of our English masters. To single them out for this purpose according to the order of the particular books, or passages, upon which they have respectively exercised their pencils, the pretensions of Mr. Tickel stand first to be examined.²

The action of the Iliad opens, you know, with the speech of Chryses, whose daughter, having been taken captive by the Grecians, was allotted to Agamemnon. This venerable priest of Apollo is represented as addressing himself to the Grecian chiefs, in the following pathetic simplicity of eloquence:

Ατρεΐδαι τε, καὶ ἄλλοι εὐκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί,
 Ὑμῖν μὲν θεοὶ δοῖεν ὀλυμπία^d δωμάτων ἔχοντες,
 Ἐκπερσαὶ Πριάμοιο πόλιν, εὐ^e δ' οἰκαδ' ἰκε-
 σθαί·

Παῖδα δὲ μοι λυσαίτε φίλην, τὰ δ' ἀποινα
 δεχέσθε,
 Ἀζόμενοι Διὸς υἱὸν ἐκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα.

(Bk.) i. 17(-21)³

Great Atreus' sons, and warlike Greece, attend.
 So may th' immortal Gods your cause defend,
 So may you Priam's lofty bulwarks burn,
 And rich in gather'd spoils to Greece return,
 As, for these gifts, my daughter you bestow,
 And rev'rence due to great Apollo shew,
 Jove's fav'rite offspring, terrible in war,
 Who sends his shafts unerring from afar.

Tickel.

d ὀλυμπία 4; αλυμπία 8.

e Erroneously printed as εν 9.

That affecting tenderness of the father, which Homer has marked out by the melancholy flow of the lines, as well as by the endearing expression of

παῖδα δὲ μοι λυσαιτε φίλην,

is entirely lost by Mr. Tickel. When Chryses coldly mentions his daughter, without a single epithet of concern or affection, he seems much too indifferent himself to move the audience in his favour. But the whole passage, as it stands in Mr. Pope's *Iliad*, is in general animated with a far more lively spirit of poetry. Who can observe the moving posture of supplication in which he has drawn the venerable old priest, stretching out his arms in all the affecting warmth of intreaty, without sharing in his distress, and melting into pity?

Ye kings and warriors! may your vows be crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground:
May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore:
But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryseis to these arms again.
If mercy fail, yet let my presents move,
And dread avenging Phoebus, son of Jove.

Pope (Bk. 1, 23-30)

The insinuation with which Chryses closes his speech, that the Grecians must expect the indignation of Apollo would pursue them if they rejected the petition of his priest, is happily intimated by a single epithet:

And dread avenging Phoebus,

whereas the other translator takes the compass of three lines, to express the same thought less strongly.

When the heralds are sent by Agamemnon to Achilles, in order to demand Briseis, that chief is prevailed upon to part with her: and accordingly directs Patroclus to deliver up this^f contested beauty into their hands:

f that 3.

Πατροκλος δε φιλω επεπειθεθ' εταιρω,
 Εη δ' αγαγε κλισιης Βρισηϊδα καλλιπαρην,
 Δωκε δ' αγειν· τω δ' αυτις ιτην παρα νηας Α-
 χαιων.
 Η δ' αεκουσ' αμα τοισι γυνη κεν·⁹

(Bk.) i. 345(-348)

The beauty of Briseis,^h as described in these lines, together with the reluctance with which she is here represented as forced from her lord, cannot but touch the reader in a very sensible manner. Mr. Tickel, however, has debased this affecting picture, by the most unpoetical and familiar diction. I will not delay you with making my objections in form to his language; but have distinguished the exceptionable expressions, in the lines themselves:

Patroclus his dear friend obey'd,ⁱ
And usher'd in the lovely weeping maid;
Sore sigh'd she, as the heralds took her hand,
 And oft look'd back, slow-moving o'er the strand.

Tickel.

Our British Homer has restored this piece to its original grace and delicacy:

Patroclus now th' unwilling Beauty brought:
 She, in soft sorrows, and in pensive thought,
 Pass'd silent, as the heralds held her hand,
 And oft look'd back, slow-moving o'er the strand.

Pope (Bk. I, 450-454)

The tumultuous behaviour of Achilles, as described by Homer in the lines immediately following, afford a very pleasing and natural contrast to the more composed and silent sorrow of Briseis. The poet represents that hero as suddenly rushing out from his tent, and flying to the seashore,

g ηεν 7.

h The erroneous Chryseis, corrected in 5, 6, 7, returns in 8 and persists in 9.

i In all editions except 8, again even in 9, oblig'd takes the place of obey'd.

where he gives vent to his indignation; and in bitterness of soul complains to Thetis, not only of the dishonour brought upon him by Agamemnon, but of the injustice even of Jupiter himself:

αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεύς
 Δακρυσας, ἐταρων ἀφαρ ἐζέτο^j νόσφι λιασθεῖς,
 θιν' ἐφ' ἄλος πολιῆς, ὁρῶν ἐπὶ οἰνοπα πόντον.
 Πολλὰ δὲ μητρὶ φίλῃ ἤρησατο χεῖρας ὀρεγνύς.

(Bk.) i. 348^k (-351)

Mr. Tickel, in rendering the sense of these lines, has risen into a somewhat higher flight of poetry than usual. However, you will observe his expression in one or two places is exceedingly languid and prosaic; as the epithet he^l has given to the waves is highly injudicious. Curling billows might be very proper in describing a calm, but suggests too pleasing an image to be applied to the ocean when represented as black with storms.^m

The widow'd hero, when the Fair was gone,
 Far from his friends satⁿ bath'd in tears, alone,
 On the cold beach he sat,ⁿ and fix'd his eyes
 Where, black with storms the curling billows rise.
 And as the sea wide-rolling he survey'd
 With out-stretch'd arms to his fond mother pray'd.

Tickel.

Mr. Pope has opened the thought in these lines with great dignity of numbers, and exquisite propriety of imagination; as the additional circumstances which^o he has thrown in, are so many beautiful improvements upon his author:

j ἐξεται 5, 6, 7.

k No source cited in 8.

l which he 3.

m The entire sentence appears after the subsequent quotation in 5, 6, 7.

n sate 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

o which omitted in 5, 6, 7.

Not so his loss the fierce Achilles bore:
 But sad retiring to the sounding shore,
 O'er the wild margin of the deep he hung,
 That kindred deep from which his mother sprung:
 Then bath'd in tears of anger and disdain,
 Thus loud lamented to the stormy main.

Pope (Bk. 1, 454-459)

Apollo having sent a plague among the Grecians, in resentment of the injury done to his priest Chryses by detaining his daughter, Agamemnon consents that Chryseis shall be restored. Accordingly, a ship is fitted out under the command of Ulysses, who is employed to conduct the damsel to her father. That hero and his companions having arrived at Chrysa, the place to which they were bound, deliver^p up their charge; and having performed a sacrifice to Apollo, set sail early the next morning for the Grecian camp. Upon this occasion Homer exhibits to us a most beautiful sea-piece:

Ἥμος δ' ἡελίος κατέδυ, καὶ ἐπὶ κνεφας ἦλθε,
 Δὴ τότε κοιμήσαντο παρὰ πρυμνησία νηός.
 Ἥμος δ' ἡριγένεια φανῆ ροδοδακτύλος ἥως,
 Καὶ τότε ἐπειτ' ἀναγοντο μετὰ στρατὸν εὐρυν Ἀ-
 χαιῶν.
 Τοῖσιν δ' ἵκμενον οὐρὸν ἰεὶ ἐκαεργός Ἀπολλῶν.
 Οἱ δ' ἱστὸν στήσαντ' ἀνα θ' ἱστία λευκά πετασ-
 σαν.^q
 Ἐν δ' ἀνέμος πρῆσεν μέσον ἱστίον, ἀμφὶ δέκυ-
 μα
 Στεῖρῃ πορφύρεον μεγαλ' ἰαχε, νεὸς^r ἰουσης.
 Ἡ δ' ἔθεεν κατὰ κύμα διαπρησσοῦσα^s κέλευθα.

(Bk.) i. 475^t(-483)

If there is any passage throughout Mr. Tickel's translation of this book, which has the least pretence to stand in competition with Mr. Pope's version, it is undoubtedly that which corresponds with the Greek lines just now quoted. It would

p delivered 3.

q πετασσαν 3.

r νηός 3, 5, 6, 8.

s διαπρησσοῦσα 8.

t Erroneously printed 474 in 9.

indeed be an instance of great partiality not to acknowledge, they breathe the true spirit of poetry; and I must own myself at a loss which to prefer upon the whole; tho' I think Mr. Pope is evidently superior to his rival, in his manner of opening the description:

At ev'ning thro' the shore dispers'd they sleep,
Hush'd by the distant roarings of the deep.
When now, ascending from the shades of night,
Aurora glow'd in all her rosy light,
The daughter of the dawn: th' awaken'd crew
Back to the Greeks encamp'd their course renew.
The breezes freshen: for with friendly gales
Apollo swell'd their wide-distended sails;
Cleft by the rapid prow the waves divide,
And in hoarse murmurs break on either side.

Tickel.

'Twas night: the chiefs beside their vessel lie,
Till rosy morn had purpled o'er the sky:
Then launch, and hoist^u the mast; indulgent gales,
Supply'd by Phoebus, fill the swelling sails;
The milk-white canvas bellying as they blow,
The parted ocean foams and roars below:
Above the bounding billows swift they flew, &c.

Pope (Bk. 1, 622-628)

There is something wonderfully pleasing in that^v judicious pause, which Mr. Pope has placed at the beginning of these lines. It necessarily awakens the attention of the reader, and gives a much greater air of solemnity to the scene, than if the circumstance of the time had been less distinctly pointed out, and blended, as in Mr. Tickel's translation, with the rest of the description.

Homer has been celebrated by antiquity for those sublime images of the Supreme Being, which he so often raises in the Iliad. It is Macrobius, if I remember right,⁴ who informs us, that Phidias being asked from whence he took the

u hoise in all editions.

v the 3, 8.

idea of his celebrated^w statue of Olympian Jupiter, acknowledged that he had heated his imagination by the following lines:

Η, και κυανερσιν επ' οφρυσι νευσε Κρονιων,
 Αμβροσιαι δ' αρα χαιται επερρωσαντο ανακτος,
 Κρατος απ' αθανατοιο· μεγαν δ' ελελιξεν Ο-
 λυμπον.

(Bk.) i. 528^x(-530)

But whatever magnificence of imagery Phidias might discover in the original, the English reader will scarce, I imagine, conceive any thing very grand and sublime from the following copy:

This said, his kingly brow the Sire inclin'd,
 The large black curls fell awful from behind,
 Thick shadowing the stern forehead of the god:
 Olympus trembled at th' almighty nod.

Tickel.

That our modern statuaries, however, may not have an excuse for burlesquing the figure of the great father of gods and men, for want of the benefit of so animating a model, Mr. Pope has preserved it to^y them in all its original majesty:

He spoke, and awful bends his sable brows;
 Shakes his ambrosial curls and gives the nod,
 The stamp of fate, and sanction of the god:
 High heav'n with trembling the dread signal took,
 And all Olympus to the centre shook.

Pope (Bk. 1, 683-687)

I took occasion in a former letter, to make some exceptions to a passage or two in the parting of Hector and Andromache, as translated by your favourite poet. I shall now produce a few lines from the same beautiful episode for

w the idea of his celebrated omitted in 8.

x 523 8.

y for 5, 6, 7.

another purpose, and in order to shew, with how much more masterly a hand, even than Dryden himself, our great improver of English poetry has worked upon the same subject.

As Andromache is going to the tower of Ilion, in order to take a view of the field of battle, Hector meets her, together with her son the young Astyanax, at the Scaean gate. The circumstances of this sudden interview are finely imagined. Hector, in the first transport of his joy, is unable to utter a single word, at the same time that Andromache, tenderly embracing his hands, bursts out into a flood of tears:

Ἦτοι ὁ μὲν μειδῆσεν ἰδὼν εἰς παῖδα σιωπῇ°
 Ἀνδρομαχῇ δὲ οἱ ἀγχι παρίστατο δακρυχεοῦσα,^z
 Ἐντ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ, ἐπὸς τ' ἔφατ' ἐκ^{aa} τ' ὄνο-
 μαζε.

(Bk.) vi. 404^{bb} (-406)

Dryden has translated this passage with a cold and unpoetical fidelity to the mere letter of the original:

Hector beheld him with a silent smile,
 His tender wife stood weeping by the while,
 Press'd in her own his warlike hand she took,
 Then sigh'd, and thus prophetically spoke.

Dryden.

But Pope has judiciously taken a larger compass, and by heightning the piece with a few additional touches, has wrought it up in all the affecting spirit of tenderness and poetry:

Silent the warrior smil'd, and pleas'd resign'd
 To tender passions all his mighty mind:
 His beauteous princess cast a mournful look,
 Hung on his hand, and then dejected spoke;
 Her bosom labour'd with a boding sigh,
 And the big tear stood trembling in her eye.

Pope (Bk. vi, 504-509)

z δακρυχεοῦσα 5, 6.

aa εκ omitted 5, 6, 7.

bb Omitted 8.

Andromache afterwards endeavors to persuade Hector to take upon himself the defence of the city, and not hazard a life so important, she tells him, to herself and his son, in the more^{cc} dangerous action of the field:

Την δ' αὐτε^{dd} προσεειπε μεγας κορυθαιολος Ε-
κτωρ,
Ἢ καὶ ἐμοὶ ταδε παντα μελει, ^{κτωρ,} γυναι^ο ἀλλὰ
μαλ' αἰνως
Αἰδεομαι Τρωας καὶ Τρωαδας ἐλκεσι πεπλους,
Αἰκε, κακος ως, νοσφιν αλυσκαζω πολεμοιο.

(Bk.) vi. 440^{ee}(-443)

To whom the noble Hector thus replied:
That and the rest are in my daily care;
But should I shun the dangers of the war,
With scorn the Trojans would reward my pains,
And their proud ladies with their sweeping trains.
The Grecian swords and lances I can bear:
But loss of honour is my only care.⁵

Dryden.^{ff}

Nothing can be more flat and unanimated than these^{gg} lines. One may say upon this occasion, that Dryden himself, I remember, somewhere observes, that a good poet is no^{hh} more like himself in a dull translation, than his dead carcase would be to his living body.⁶ To catch indeed the soul of our Grecian bard, and breathe his spirit into an English version, seems to have been a privilege reserved solely for Pope:

The chief replied: That post shall be my care;
Nor that alone, but all the works of war.
How would the sons of Troy, in arms renown'd,
And Troy's proud dames, whose garments sweep the ground,
Attaint the lustre of my former name,
Should Hector basely quit the fields of fame.

Pope (Bk. vi, 560-565)

cc Omitted 3.

dd αυπε 8.

ee Omitted 8.

ff Dryd. in all editions except 8.

gg those 3, 8.

hh Omitted 3.

In the farther prosecution of this episode Hector prophesies his own death, and the destruction of Troy; to which he adds, that Andromache should be led captive into Argos,ⁱⁱ where, among other disgraceful offices, which he particularly enumerates, she should be employed, he tells her, in the servile task of drawing water. The different manner in which this last circumstance is expressed by our two^{jj} English poets, will afford the strongest instance, how much additional force the same thought will receive from a more graceful turn of phrase:

Or from deep wells the living stream to take,
And on thy weary shoulders bring it back.

Dryden.

or bring
The weight of waters from Hyperia's spring.

Pope (Bk. vi. 582-583)

It is in certain peculiar turns of diction that the language of poetry is principally distinguished from that of prose; as indeed the same words are, in general, common to them both. It is in a turn of this kind, that the beauty of the last quoted line consists. For the whole grace of the expression would vanish, if, instead of the two substantives which are placed at the beginning of the verse, the poet had employed the more common syntax of a substantive with its adjective.

When this faithful pair have taken their final adieu of each other, Hector returns to the field of battle, at the same time that the disconsolate^{kk} Andromache joins her maidens in the palace. Homer describes this circumstance in the following tender manner:⁷

Ως αρα φωνησας κορυθ'ειλετο παιδιμος Εκτωρ
Ιππουριν° αλοχος δε φιλη οικονδε βεβηκει
Εντροπαλιζομενη, θαλερον^{ll} κατα δακρυ χεουσα.
Αιφα δ'επειθ' ^{mm} ικανε δομους ευ ναιεταονταςⁿⁿ
Εκτορος ανδροφονοιο° κιχησατο^{oo} δ'ενδοθι πολ-
λας

ii to Argos 8.

jj Omitted 8.

kk the disconsolate omitted 8.

Αμφιπολους, τρισιν δε γοον πασησιν ενωρσεν.
 Αι μεν ετι^{PP} ζων γοον^{qq} Εκτορα ψ ενι οικψ.

(Bk.) vi. 494^{rr}(-500)

I will make no remarks upon the different success of our two celebrated poets in translating this passage; but, after having laid both before you, leave their versions to speak for themselves. The truth is, the disparity between them is much too visible to require any comment to render it more observable:

At this for new replies he did not stay,
 But lac'd his crested helm, and strode away.
 His lovely consort to her house return'd,
 And looking often back, in silence mourn'd:
 Home when she came, her secret woe she vents,
 And fills the palace with her loud laments.
 Those loud laments her echoing maids restore,
 And Hector, yet alive, as dead deplore.

Dryden.

Thus having said, the glorious chief resumes
 His tow'ry helmet, black with shading plumes.
 His princess parts with a prophetic sigh,
 Unwilling parts, and oft reverts her eye,
 That stream'd at ev'ry look: then moving slow,
 Sought her own palace, and indulg'd her woe.
 There, while her tears deplor'd the godlike man,
 Thro' all the train the soft infection ran:
 The pious maids their mingled sorrow shed,
 And mourn the living Hector as the dead.

. Pope (Bk. vi, 638-647)

ll	θαληρον 8.
mm	ιπειθ' 3; ειπειθ' 8.
nn	ναιεταονττας 8.
oo	κινησατο 3.
pp	επι 7.
qq	γων 5, 6, 7.
rr	Source omitted 8.

As I purpose to follow Mr. Pope thro' those several parts of the Iliad, where any of our distinguished poets have gone before him; I must lead you on till we come to the speech of Sarpedon to Glaucus, in the xiith Book.^{ss}

Γλαυκε, τη^{tt} δη νωϊ τετιμημεσθα^{uu} μαλιστα
Εδρη τε, κρεασιν τε, ιδε πλειοις^{vv} δεπαεσσιν,
Εν Λυκιη, παντες δε, θεους ως, εισορωσι,
Και τεμενος^{ww} νεμομεσθα μεγα^{xx} Εανθοιο παρ'ο-
χθας,

Καλον, φυταλιης^{yy} και^{zz} αρουρης^{aaa} πυροφοροιο;
Τῷ νυν χρη Λυκιοισι^{bbb} μετα πρωτοισιν^{ccc} εοντας
Εσταμεν, ηδε^{ddd} μαχης^{eee} καυστειρης^{fff} αντιβολησαι,^{ggg}
Οφρα τις ωδ'ειπη Λυκιων πυκα θωρηκταων,
Ου μαν ακλειεις Λυκιην κατακοιρανουσιν
Ημετεροι βασιληες, εδουσι τε πιονα μηλα,
Οινον τ'εξαιτον, μελιηδεα· αλλ'αρα και ις
Εσθλη, επει Λυκιοισι μετα πρωτοισι μαχονται.
Ω πετον· ει μεν γαρ πολεμον περι τονδε φυ-
γοντες,

Αiei δη μελλοιμεν αγηρω τ'αθανατω τε
Εσσεσθ', ουτε κεν αυτος ενι^{hhh} πρωτοισι μαχοιμην,
Ουτε κε σε στελλοιμι μαχην ες κυδιανειραν·
Νυν δ' (εμπηςⁱⁱⁱ γαρ κηρες εφεστασιν θανατοιο
Μυριαι,^{jjj}ας ουκ εστι φυγειν βροτον, ουδ'
υπαλυξαι)

Ιομεν· ηε τω ευχος ορεζομεν, ηε τις ημιν.

(Bk.) xii. 310(-328)

ss	Book xii 8.
tt	τιν 6, 7, 8.
uu	τετιμημνοθα 3.
vv	πλειοσις 8.
ww	πεμενος 6, 7.
xx	μιγα 8.
yy	φυλαιλιης 4.
zz	καν 3.
aaa	ειρουρης 5, 6, 7.
bbb	Λυκιοσι 8.
ccc	προτοισιν 4, 5, 6, 7.
ddd	εδε 6, 7.
eee	μαχης 8.
fff	καυστειρες 4, 5, 6, 7.
ggg	αντιβολοσαι 8.
hhh	εν 4, 8.
iii	εμπες 6, 7.
jjj	Μυραι 3.

This spirited speech has been translated by the famous author of Cooper's Hill:

Above the rest why is our pomp and pow'r?
 Our flocks, our herds, and our possessions more?
 Why all the tributes land and sea affords,
 Heap'd in great chargers, load our sumptuous boards?
 Our chearful guests carouse the sparkling tears
 Of the rich grape, whilst music charms their ears.
 Why, as we pass, do those on Xanthus' shore
 As gods behold us, and as gods adore?
 But that, as well in danger as degree,
 We stand the first: that when our Lycians see
 Our brave examples, they admiring say,
 Behold our gallant leaders: these are they
 Deserve their greatness; and unenvied stand,
 Since what they act transcends what they command.
 Could the declining of this fate, oh! friend,
 Our date to immortality extend,
 Or if death sought not them, who seek not death,
 Would I advance? or should my vainer breath
 With such a glorious folly thee inspire?
 But since with fortune nature doth conspire;
 Since age, disease, or some less noble end,
 Tho' not less certain, does our days attend;
 Since 'tis decreed, and to this period lead
 A thousand ways, the noblest path we'll tread;
 And bravely on, till they, or we, or all
 A common sacrifice to honour fall.

Denham.⁸

Mr. Pope passes^{kkk} so high an encomium on these lines, as to assure us, that, if his translation of the same passage has^{lll} any spirit, it is in some degree due to them.⁹ It is certain they have great merit, considering the state of our English versification when Denham flourished: but they will by no means support Mr. Pope's compliment, any more than they will bear to stand in competition with his numbers. And I dare say, you will join me in the same^{mmm} opinion, when

kkk passeth 3.

lll hath 3.

mmm same omitted 8.

you consider the following version of this animated speech:

Why boast we, Glaucus, our extended reign,
 Where Xanthus' streams enrich the Lycian plain?
 Our num'rous herds that range the fruitful field,
 And hills where vines their purple harvest yield?
 Our foaming bowls with purer nectar crown'd,
 Our feasts enhanc'd with music's sprightly sound?
 Why on these shores are we with joy survey'd,
 Admir'd as heroes, and as gods obey'd?
 Unless great acts superior merit prove,
 And vindicate the bounteous powers above;
 That when with wond'ring eyes our martial bands
 Behold our deeds transcending our commands,
 Such, they may cry, deserve the sov'reign state,
 Whom those that envy dare not imitate.
 Could all our care elude the gloomy grave,
 Which claims no less the fearful than the brave,
 For lust of fame I should not vainly dare
 In fighting fields, nor urge thy soul to war.
 But since, alas! ignoble age must come,
 Disease, and death's inexorable doom;
 The life, which others pay, let us bestow,
 And give to fame what we to nature owe;
 Brave tho' we fall, and honour'd, if we live,
 Or let us glory gain, or glory give.

Pope (Bk. xii, 371-396)

If any thing can be justly objected to this translation, it is, perhaps, that in one or two places it is too diffusedⁿⁿⁿ and descriptive for that agitation in which it was spoken. In general, however, one may venture to assert, that it is warmed with the same ardour of poetry and heroism that glows in the original; as those several thoughts, which Mr. Pope has intermixed of his own, naturally arise out of the sentiments of his author, and are perfectly conformable to the character and circumstances of the speaker.

I shall close this review with Mr. Congreve, who has translated the petition of Priam to Achilles for the body of his son Hector, together with the lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen.¹⁰

ⁿⁿⁿ diffuse 8.

Homer represents the unfortunate King of Troy, as entering unobserved into the tent of Achilles; and illustrates the surprize which arose in that chief and his attendants, upon the first discovery^{ooo} of Priam, by the following simile:

Ως δ' ὅταν ἀνδρ' αἴτῃ πυκινῇ λαβῇ, οὐτ' ἐνὶ πα-
τρῇ
 Φῶτα κατακτείνας ἀλλῶν ἐξίκετο δῆμον,
 Ἀνδρὸς ἐς ἀφνειοῦ, θαμβὸς δ' ἔχει εἰσορῶν-
τας·
 Ως Ἀχιλεὺς ^{PPP} θαμβήσεν, ἰδὼν ^{qqq} Πριάμον θεοει-
δεα.

(Bk.) xxiv. 480(-483)

Nothing can be more languid and inelegant than the manner in which Congreve has rendered this passage:

But as a wretch, who has a murder done,
 And seeking refuge, does from justice run;
 Ent'ring some house, in haste, where he's unknown,
 Creates amazement in the lookers-on:
 So did Achilles gaze, surpriz'd to see
 The godlike Priam's royal misery.

Congreve^{rrr}

But Pope has raised the same thought with his usual grace and spirit:

As when a wretch, who, conscious of his crime,
 Pursued for murder, flies his native clime,
 Just gains some frontier, breathless, pale, amaz'd:
 All gaze, all wonder: thus Achilles gaz'd.

Pope (Bk. xxiv, 590-593)

The speech of Priam is wonderfully pathetic and affecting. He tells Achilles, that out of fifty sons he had one only remaining; and of him he was now unhappily bereaved by his

ooo discovering 8.

ppp Ἀχιλλεύς 3.

qqq ἰδὼν 5, 6, 7.

rrr Cong. 4, 5, 6, 7, 9.

sword. He conjures him by his tenderness for his own father to commiserate the most wretched of parents, who, by an uncommon severity of fate, was thus obliged to kiss those hands which were imbrued in the blood of his children:

του νυν εινεχ'ικανω νηας Αχαιων,
 Λυσομενος παρα^{sss} σειο, φερω δ'απερεισι'α-
 Αλλ^{ttt} αιδειο θεους, Αχιλευ,^{uuu} αυτον τ'ελεη-
 σον,
 Μνησαμενος σου πατρος^{vvv} εγω δ'ελεεινότερος
 περ
 Ετλην δ', οι ουπω τις επιχθονιος βροτος αλ-
 λος,
 Ανδρος παιδοφονοιο ποτι στομα χειρ'ορεγεσθαι.

501. (Bk. xxiv. 501-506)

These moving lines Mr. Congreve has debased into the lowest and most unaffecting prose:

For his sake only I am hither^{www} come;¹¹
 Rich gifts I bring, and wealth, an endless sum;
 All to redeem that fatal prize you won,
 A worthless ransom for so brave a son.
 Fear the just gods, Achilles, and on me
 With pity look; think, you your father see:
 Such as I am, he is; alone in this
 I can no equal have in miseries;
 Of all mankind most wretched and forlorn,^{xxx}
 Bow'd with such weights as never has been borne;
 Reduc'd to kneel and pray to you, from whom
 The spring and source of all my sorrows come;
 With gifts to court mine and my country's bane,
 And kiss those hands which have my children slain.

Congreve.

sss Erroneously printed as πασα in 9.

ttt Αλλα 3; αλλ 8.

uuu Αχιλλευ 3; Εχιλευ 8.

vvv παρος 8.

www hither I am 3, 8.

xxx forlorn 4, 5, 6, 7.

Nothing could compensate the trouble of labouring thro' these heavy and tasteless rhimes, but the pleasure of being relieved at the end of them with a more lively prospect of poetry:

For him thro' hostile camps I bent my way,
 For him thus prostrate at thy feet I lay;
 Large gifts proportion'd to thy wrath I bear;
 O hear the wretched, and the gods revere:
 Think of thy father, and this face behold:
 See him in me, as helpless and as old:
 Tho' not so wretched: there he yields to me,
 The first of men in sov'reign misery;
 Thus forc'd to kneel, thus grov'ling to embrace
 The scourge and ruin of my realm and race:
 Suppliant my children's murd'rer to implore,
 And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore.

Pope (Bk. xxiv, 622-633)

Achilles having at length consented to restore the dead body of Hector, Priam conducts it to his palace. It is there placed in funeral pomp, at the same time that mournful dirges are sung over the corpse, intermingled with the lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen:

τον μὲν ἐπεῖτα,
 Τρητοῖς ἐν λεχεεσσι θεῖαν, παρὰ δ' εἰσαν
 αἰδοὺς,
 Ἑρηνῶν ἐξαρχοὺς, οἷτε στονοεσσάν αἰδῆν
 Οἱ μὲν ἀρ' ἑρηνεον, ἐπὶ δὲ στεναχοντο
 γυναικες.

719. (Bk. xxiv. 719-722)

There is something extremely solemn and affecting, in Homer's description of this scene^{yyy} of sorrow: a translator, who was touched with the least spark of poetry, could not, one should imagine, but rise beyond himself, in copying after so noble an original. It has not, however, been able to elevate Mr. Congreve above his usual flatness of numbers:

^{yyy} kind 8.

then laid

With care the body on a sumptuous bed,
 And round about were skilful singers plac'd,
 Who wept and sigh'd, and in sad notes express'd
 Their moan: All in a chorus did agree
 Of universal, mournful harmony.

Congreve.

It would be the highest injustice to the following lines to quote them in opposition to those of Mr. Congreve: I produce them, as marked with a vein of poetry much superior even to the original:

They weep, and place him on^{zzz} a bed of state.
 A melancholy choir attend around^{aaaa}
 With plaintive sighs, and music's solemn sound:
 Alternately they sing, alternate flow
 Th' obedient tears, melodious in their woe;
 While deeper sorrows groan from each full heart,
 And nature speaks at ev'ry pause of art.

Pope (Bk. xxiv, 899-905)

Thus, Euphronius, I have brought before you some of the most renowned of our^{bbbb} British bards, contending, as it were, for the prize of poetry: And there can be no debate to whom it justly belongs. Mr. Pope seems, indeed, to have raised our numbers to the highest possible perfection of strength and harmony: and, I fear, all the praise that the best succeeding poets can expect, as to their versification, will be, that they have^{cccc} happily imitated his manner. Farewell,^{dddd} I am, &c.

zzz in 3.

aaaa him round 8.

bbbb the 8.

cccc have omitted in 8.

dddd Farewell omitted in 5, 6, 7; Farewel 4.

NOTES

Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

- 1 Ed. G. F. Russell Barker and Alan H. Stenning (London: 1928).
- 2 Alumni Cantabrigienses, edd. John Venn and J. A. Venn (Cambridge: 1922-1954), III, 175; IV, 533.
- 3 Gray to Walpole, Ca. January 1748, Horace Walpole's Correspondence, ed. W. S. Lewis (New Haven: 1937-), XIV, 39; Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, The Letters of Samuel Johnson, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: 1952), II, 351.
- 4 See, for example, the penetrating monograph of Douglas Knight, Pope and the Heroic Tradition (New Haven: 1951).
- 5 "Thus it will be found in the progress of learning that in all nations the first writers are simple and that every age improves in elegance. One refinement always makes way for another, and what was expedient to Virgil was necessary to Pope." Lives of the English Poets, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (Oxford: 1905), III, 239.
- 6 Knight, Pope and the Heroic Tradition, p. 73.
- 7 Ibid., p. 41.
- 8 Lives of the Poets, III, 239.
- 9 It is worth noting that William Holwell in his Extracts from Mr. Pope's Translation corresponding with the beauties of Homer selected from the Iliad (Oxford: 1776) prints the Fitzosborne letters on Pope as a preface.
- 10 Paul A. Doyle in his unpublished dissertation on Melmoth suggests that the author may have been John Skynner.

- 11 Robert Dodsley (London: 1910), p. 334.
- 12 Literary Anecdotes (London: 1812), III, 42.
- 13 M. L. Clarke, Greek Studies in England 1700-1830 (Cambridge: 1945), p. 64.

Chapter Two: THE FIRST LETTER TO EUPHRONIUS

- 1 Melmoth is quoting inaccurately from Denham's "To Sir Richard Fanshawe upon his translation of Pastor Fido." See The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham, ed. Theodore H. Banks (New Haven: 1928), p. 143. The line should read, "That few but such as cannot write, Translate."
- 2 Through some inexplicable lapse, Melmoth has written "Eurus" where Pope has "Notus." This curious error persists throughout all of the eighteenth-century editions.
- 3 Eustathii Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem (Lipsiae: 1827-1830), II, 230-232. The night-piece is one of the passages cited by Johnson in two versions -- Pope's printed version and the earlier manuscript version "obtained by Bolingbroke as a curiosity"-- and on which he remarks: "Of these specimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights to trace the mind from the rudeness of its first conceptions to the elegance of the last, will naturally desire a greater number." See Lives of the English Poets, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill (Oxford: 1905), III, 124-126. On the Greek passage Pope writes: "This Comparison is inferior to none in Homer. It is the most beautiful Night-piece that can be found in Poetry. He presents you with a Prospect of the Heavens, the Seas, and the Earth: The Stars shine, the Air is serene, the World enlightened, and the Moon mounted in Glory." The Iliad of Homer translated by Mr. Pope (London: 1715-1720), II, 304.
- 4 "We acknowledge him the Father of Poetical Diction, the first who taught that Language of the Gods to Men." Pope, Preface to the Iliad. For a useful survey of

eighteenth-century views on the primacy of Homer, see Donald M. Foerster, Homer in English Criticism (New Haven: 1947).

- 5 "If... we take a view of the sentiments, the same presiding faculty is eminent in the sublimity and spirit of his thoughts. Longinus has given his opinion, that it was in this part Homer principally excelled." Pope's preface.
- 6 Writing to the Rev. Ralph Bridges, Pope observes: "The great beauty of Homer's language, as I take it, consists in that noble simplicity which runs through all his works,..."The Works of Alexander Pope, edd. Whitwell Elwin and William Courthope (London: 1871-1889), VI, 13. "Simplicity is the Mean between Ostentation and Rusticity. This pure and noble Simplicity is no where in such Perfection as in the Scripture and our Author." Pope's preface.
- 7 Pope's own note on verse 55 of the fourth book reads: "We find in Persius's Satyrs the Name of Labeo, as an ill Poet who made a miserable Translation of the Iliad; one of whose Verses is still preserv'd, and happens to be that of this Place. Crudum manduces Priamum, Priamique pisinnos. It may seem from this, that his Translation was servilely literal (as the old Scholiast on Persius observes.) And one cannot but take notice that Ogilby's and Hobbes's in this Place are not unlike Labeo's. Both King and People thou would'st eat alive. And eat up Priam and his Children all." Pope may well have been following Barnes, who in his edition remarks on this line: "Versum hunc olim a Labeone sic traductum, Crudum manduces Priamum, Priamique pisinnos, videt Persius, #I. v. 4 and 50, Vid. Voss de Poetis Latinis, p. 44." See Gerardi Joannis Vossii Tractus Philologici de Rhetorica, de Poëtica, de Artium et Scientiarum natura ac constitutione (Amstelodami: 1697), p. 244. The "old scholiast" is identified by Barnes as Cornutus. Joseph Spence in his celebrated essay on Pope's Odyssey also mentions Labeo and compares his literal rendering of Homer with Hobbes' and Ogilby's translations. "That venerable old Poet (Homer) uses a phrase which, tho' I do not believe it to have been

mean in his times, does most certainly sound so in the present: In speaking of a Person entirely lost in melancholy, he says that he was continually eating up his own Mind:...In another part of Homer, we have the same manner of Expression; and it is as meanly translated by several Hands. The Passage is a part of Jupiter's Speech to Juno; in which, to set out the violence of her hatred to Priam and his family, the God says, that she wou'd eat them, or swallow them up quick. Actius Labeo, a wretched tho' a Court writer, translated several Books of the Iliad into Latin; and if we may guess at the rest, by the only Verse left us of that Work...we have no great Reason to lament the loss of it: This an old Scholiast has preserv'd, for a taste of the Performance: Crudum manduces Priamum, Priamique pisinnos. Labeo, as Mr. Pope observes in his Note upon the place is equal'd by Ogilby; Both King and People thou woudst eat alive: As is Ogilby by Hobbs; and eat up Priam and his people all," An Essay on Pope's Odyssey in which some particular 'Beauties' and 'Blemishes' of that Work are Consider'd (London: 1726), pp. 113-114.

- 8 Quoted in Samuel Clarke's edition with the note: "Uti observavit Camerarius." See Opus utrumque Homeri Iliados et Odysseae, ed. Joachim Camerarius (Basileae: 1551), Iliad, p. 13.
- 9 Gilbert Wakefield in his edition of Pope's Iliad on this line remarks: "This is alike contrary to nature and his original. He had a good example in Ogilby: 'Then started Nestor up.' And he should have written: 'Quick from his seat starts up the Pylian sage.'" "

Chapter Three: THE SECOND LETTER TO EUPHRONIUS

- 1 Jean Louis Guez Balzac, Letters, ed. and trans. Sir Richard Baker and others (London, 1654), p. 111.
- 2 The Art of Sinking in Poetry, Martinus Scriblerus' ΠΕΡΙ ΒΑΘΟΥΣ, ed. Edna Leake Steeves (New York: 1952), pp. 53-59.

- 3 "What image of their fury can we form? Dulness and rage, a puddle in a storm." "Epistle I to Mr. Pope," The Poetical Works of Edward Young with a memoir by the Rev. John Mitford (London: 1906), II, 313.
- 4 This was a commonplace of epic theory in the eighteenth century. Cf. The Spectator, No. 285: "The great masters in composition know very well that many an elegant phrase becomes improper for a Poet or an Orator when it has been debased by common use.... (An epic poem) ought to deviate from the common forms and ordinary Phrases of Speech. The Judgment of a poet very much discovers itself in shunning the common Roads of Expression."
- 5 In the fifth and in subsequent editions Melmoth supplies this note: "Candor obliges me to observe, that perhaps the disjunctive participle or, is an error of the press, and that in Mr. Pope's manuscript it was and. This correction would render the passage much less exceptionable; and probably is the true reading." There is nothing to support Melmoth's suggestion.
- 6 "But the nature of this form of embellishment (epithet) is such that, while style is bare and inelegant without any epithets at all, it is overloaded when a large number are employed. For then it becomes long-winded and cumbrous, in fact you might compare it to an army with as many camp-followers as soldiers, an army, that is to say, which has doubled its numbers without adding to its strength." Institutio Oratoria (Loeb Classics), Bk. VIII, cp. vi.
- 7 Théophile de Viau, Les Amours Tragiques de Pyrame et Thisbe (Paris: 1626), p. 48.
- 8 "Préface pour l'édition de 1701," Oeuvres de Boileau (Paris: 1928), p. 10.
- 9 Job 6:25.
- 10 Ivlīi Caesaris Scaligeri, De Causis linguae Latinae libri tredecim (Genevae (?) : 1580), Lib. III, chap. LXVI, p. 137.

- 11 In the "Dedication of the Aeneis" (Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford: 1900), II, 226), Dryden remarks: "I had long since considered that the way to please the best judges is not to translate a poet literally, and Virgil least of any other: for, his peculiar beauty lying in his choice of words, I am excluded from it by the narrow compass of our heroic verse."
- 12 Even in the eighteenth century there was no reason to restrict the verb "bury" to the sense of interment. See Johnson's Dictionary and the examples there cited.
- 13 Melmoth could have learned this from Barnes' edition of the Iliad, where the verse is thus annotated: "Idem ferè Julius Scaliger Poetic, 1.5, c.3, fol. 242. Falsum est, à Pulmone Caput avulsum loqui posse. Sed nec hoc dicit Homerus, at loquenti jam tum, et plura loqui paranti Caput excisum: non enim φθεγγομενη legimus, ut nec ipse Scaliger, sed φθεγγομενου."
- 14 This observation Melmoth would encounter in Clarke's edition of the Iliad, where, on lines 210 and 211 of the ninth book, the very passage cited by Melmoth later in this paragraph, Clarke quotes Quintilian thus: "Homerum nemo in magnis sublimitate, in parvis proprietate superaverit, Quintilian, lib. 10, cap.1 (of the Institutio Oratoria)."
- 15 Virgil's husbandman "delivers the meanest of his precepts with a kind of grandeur, he breaks the clods and tosses the dung about with an air of gracefulness." "An Essay on Virgil's Georgics," The Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Addison, ed. A. C. Guthkelch (London: 1914), II, 9.

Chapter Four: THE THIRD LETTER TO EUPHRONIUS

- 1 Not identified.
- 2 Thomas Tickell, whose translation of the Iliad was designed to forestall Pope. See Richard Eustace Tickell, Thomas Tickell and the Eighteenth Century Poets (1685-1740) (London: 1931) and George Sherburn, The Early Career of Alexander Pope (Oxford: 1934), pp. 114-148.

- 3 On this passage Clarke's note reads: "'Quàm breviter,' (inquit Camerarius,) 'quam artificiosè benevolentiam captat!' Immò verò quàm breviter, quinis versibus, Imperatores binos, exercitum, universum, blandiloquentiâ, relligione, lucro, terrore, commovit!'"
- 4 Melmoth's memory could easily have been refreshed by consulting Clarke's note on the lines quoted here. On line 528 of the first book Clarke remarks, in part: "'Phidias, cùm Jovem Olympium fingerit, interrogatus de quo exemplo divinam mutaretur effigiem, respondit, archetypum Jovis in his se tribus Homeri versibus invenisse.' Macrob. lib. 5. c. 13 (Saturnaliorum).'"
- 5 The last line should read "But loss of honor is my only fear."
- 6 "Preface to *Sylvæ* or The Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies," Essays of Dryden, I, 253.
- 7 On line 500 Clarke comments: "'Hâc quidem sententiâ nihil unquam fuit, ad commovendos affectus, neq; excogitatum exquisitiùs, neq; elegantius dictum.'"
- 8 Works of Denham, pp. 179-180.
- 9 "I ought not to neglect putting the reader in mind, that this speech of Sarpedon is excellently translated by Sir John Denham, and if I have done it with any spirit, it is partly owing to him." Pope's note, Iliad, 1756, III, 208.
- 10 Congreve's translation may be found in The Complete Works of William Congreve, ed. Montague Summers (London: 1923), IV, 25-32.
- 11 Neither of the two Melmoth versions of the arrangement of these words is correct. In Congreve the line reads, "For his sake only, hither am I come."

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